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Carol X Weakley 08/11/2006 04:48:40 PM From DB/Inbox: Carol X Weakley

Cable
Text:

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 03149

SIPDIS
CXTelA:

ACTION: POL
INFO: IPSC PD IMO RES ECON DCM DAO AMB AID ADM RSO
CONS

DISSEMINATION: POL
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:RJONES
DRAFTED: POL:JNMILLER
CLEARED: DCM:GCRETZ, POL/C:NOLSEN

VZCZCTV1967
PP RUEHC RUEHXK RUEHAM RUEHLB RUEHDM RUEHJM
RUEHGV RUCNDT
DE RUEHTV #3149 2221558
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 101558Z AUG 06
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5537
INFO RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 0530
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 0720
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 1447
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 4161
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 0515
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 3877

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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR NEA/IPA; PRM FOR RICHARD GREENE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PREF PHUM PGOV IS LE
SUBJECT: ICRC ACCESSES CIVILIANS SOUTH OF THE LITANI RIVER

REF: SEPTEL

¶1. (SBU) ICRC Middle East and North Africa Regional Director Balthasar Staehelin told the Ambassador August 9 that ICRC successfully mounted a humanitarian mission August 8 to evacuate approximately 230 civilians from Houla, south of the Litani River. (See Septel.) Staehelin said that ICRC deconflicted its movements with both the Northern Command of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and with Hizballah fighters. Staehelin explained that ICRC moved in a secure "bubble" or "box" established to envelope a small convoy of ICRC vehicles, rather than through any sort of secure "corridor" demarcated on the battlefield.

¶2. (SBU) ICRC established a secure bubble, Staehelin said, by asking the combatants to refrain from firing on or near the precise route of the convoy; the bubble was limited both geographically and temporally, according to the deconflicted route and schedule of the ICRC vehicles. A secure corridor, by contrast, relies on geography rather than movement, is not feasible in a combat zone and has proved less effective at affording protection to humanitarian convoys, according to Staehelin. He also emphasized that the coordination necessary to create a secure bubble requires clear and precise communication among ICRC, Hizballah, and the IDF.

¶3. (SBU) The Ambassador asked whether ICRC has considered using satellite tracking equipment to help protect their

vehicles. Staehelin said that these instruments would draw attention to ICRC vehicles that could lead to their theft, and could attract civilians or combatants to follow ICRC vehicles along their routes, under the assumption that the equipment provides reliable protection.

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JONES